

# Johnny Appleseed

by VACHEL LINDSAY



# Johnny Appleseed and Other Poems

By VACHEL LINDSAY

*Illustrated by George M. Richards*

THE man whose hero is Johnny Appleseed is the man to talk to the youth of America about poetry. Vachel Lindsay did this as he walked through the American countryside, sowing poems instead of seeds, having his "adventures while preaching the gospel of beauty." His poems have taken root and have stirred in the minds of young people a feeling for the possibilities of words in rhythmic patterns.

This collection includes forty-two poems brimming with imaginative appeal for young Americans. Lindsay talks about their real world, their heroes, their history, their dreams, in the kind of ballad story and picture sequence that they understand.

Any boy or girl who has read and reread lyrics like "The Flower of Mending" and "The Potatoes' Dance," ballads like "Johnny Appleseed," "The Broncho That Would Not Be Broken," and "The Chinese Nightingale," whimsies like "The Moon Poems" will be at home in the company of poets forever.

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# JOHNNY APPLESEED



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and Other Poems

by  
Vachel Lindsay

☆ ☆



Illustrated by  
George Richards

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New York  
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## FOREWORD

THE title for this selection of Vachel Lindsay's poems naturally uses the name of his Great American, Johnny Appleseed. Lindsay the hero-worshipper, the preacher, the dreamer, the glorifier of Springfield, Illinois, the banner-waver and drum-beater for all true Springfields and a great American highway connecting them—that is one Lindsay. He knows how to put the essence of an American's ideas about the pioneer ("The Santa-Fé Trail"), the sower ("Johnny Appleseed"), the circus ("The Kallyope Yell"), into booming, singing rhythms for the human voice to speak again. The virtue of his strange, emotional story-poems is in their simplicity, in their use of general ideas in mind pictures that young people can understand, and in the primitive climaxes of rhythm.

One recalls Lindsay striding about, turning an indifferent, self-conscious audience into a single-mooded mob, singing his refrains. In contrast are his lyrics. Seldom in poetry has there been so charming and also powerful a conception, as that of the "Moon Poems." And what delicate humor in "A Dirge for a Righteous Kitten," "Crickets on a Strike," "The Little Turtle," etc. What exquisite simplicity in "The Flower of Mending."

Many thousands of young people who know Lindsay personally are reading and writing poetry because he stirred them first to a feeling of the possibility of words in rhythmic pattern. These boys and girls are in high

schools all over America, or in isolated villages where he tramped, "preaching the gospel of beauty," exchanging a reading or a new poem for his food and lodging.

Other children are using many of the poems for poem-dances, demonstrating that connection, newly discovered, or rather, recently acted upon, between physical rhythmic motion and word sense. Children particularly love "The Potatoes' Dance," "The King of Yellow Butterflies," "The Chinese Nightingale." Some of them have acted out the longer poems very dramatically and with beautiful settings.

This book is for all boys and girls who love poetry already. They will find all their Lindsay favorites here in a convenient size to carry about and learn by heart. It is also, especially, for those many unfortunate youngsters who think they don't like poetry. We think this book will convert them, if any book in the world can. If only they could have seen Lindsay himself, or one of his rare imitators, do the thing right!

Beyond its importance as the first official selection from Lindsay for boys and girls, it is also an unusual record of a rare friendship. The publisher who writes this note can recall few collaborations as happy as this. George Mather Richards and Nicholas Vachel Lindsay were friends in art school in New York many years ago. Today they are as close as ever, though separated by a continent. No poem must go in that Richards does not approve, and any picture he does is perfect, though the author himself is the only person, hitherto, to illustrate his poems. His own pictures, and his theories about them, will interest older boys and girls, and can be found in his *Collected Poems, Revised and Illustrated Edition*, 1925.

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PART I  
YELLOW BUTTERFLIES





### *The Sorceress!*

I asked her, "Is Aladdin's lamp  
Hidden anywhere?"

"Look into your heart," she said,  
"Aladdin's lamp is there."

She took my heart with glowing hands.  
It burned to dust and air  
And smoke and rolling thistledown  
Blowing everywhere.

"Follow the thistledown," she said,  
"Till doomsday, if you dare,  
Over the hills and far away.  
Aladdin's lamp is there."

## *The Little Turtle*

(A Recitation for Martha Wakefield, Three Years Old)

There was a little turtle.  
He lived in a box.  
He swam in a puddle.  
He climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at a mosquito.  
He snapped at a flea.  
He snapped at a minnow.  
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito.  
He caught the flea.  
He caught the minnow.  
But he didn't catch me.



## *A Dirge for a Righteous Kitten*

(To be intoned, all but the two italicized lines, which are to be spoken in a snappy, matter-of-fact way)

Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.  
Here lies a kitten good, who kept  
A kitten's proper place.  
He stole no pantry eatables,  
Nor scratched the baby's face.  
*He let the alley-cats alone.*  
He had no yowling vice.  
His shirt was always laundried well,  
He freed the house of mice.  
Until his death he had not caused  
His little mistress tears,  
He wore his ribbon prettily,  
*He washed behind his ears.*  
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.

## *The Mysterious Cat*

(A chant for a children's pantomime dance, suggested by a picture painted by George Mather Richards)

I saw a proud, mysterious cat,  
I saw a proud, mysterious cat,  
Too proud to catch a mouse or rat—  
Mew, mew, mew.

But catnip she would eat, and purr,  
But catnip she would eat, and purr.  
And goldfish she did much prefer—  
Mew, mew, mew.

I saw a cat—'twas but a dream,  
I saw a cat—'twas but a dream  
Who scorned the slave that brought her cream—  
Mew, mew, mew.

Unless the slave were dressed in style,  
Unless the slave were dressed in style,  
And knelt before her all the while—  
Mew, mew, mew.

Did you ever hear of a thing like that?





Did you ever hear of a thing like that?  
Did you ever hear of a thing like that?  
Oh, what a proud, mysterious cat.  
Oh, what a proud, mysterious cat.  
Oh, what a proud, mysterious cat.  
Mew . . . mew . . . mew.



## Two Old Crows

Two old crows sat on a fence rail.

Two old crows sat on a fence rail,

Thinking of effect and cause,

Of weeds and flowers,

And nature's laws.

One of them muttered, one of them stuttered,

One of them stuttered, one of them muttered.

Each of them thought far more than he uttered.

One crow asked the other crow a riddle.

One crow asked the other crow a riddle:

The muttering crow

Asked the stuttering crow,

"Why does a bee have a sword to his fiddle?

Why does a bee have a sword to his fiddle?"

"Bee-cause," said the other crow,

"Bee-cause,

B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B-cause."

Just then a bee flew close to their rail:—

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz  
zzzzzzzzzz."

And those two black crows

Turned pale,

And away those crows did sail.

Why?

B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B-cause.

B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B-cause.

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz  
zzzzzzzzzz."





*An Explanation of the Grasshopper*

The Grasshopper, the grasshopper,  
I will explain to you:—  
He is the Brownies' racehorse,  
The fairies' Kangaroo.

## *The Lion*

The Lion is a kingly beast.  
He likes a Hindu for a feast.  
And if no Hindu he can get,  
The lion-family is upset.

He cuffs his wife and bites her ears  
Till she is nearly moved to tears.  
Then some explorer finds the den  
And all is family peace again.



### *The Dandelion*

O dandelion, rich and haughty,  
King of village flowers!  
Each day is coronation time,  
You have no humble hours.  
I like to see you bring a troop  
To beat the blue-grass spears,  
To scorn the lawn-mower that would be  
Like fate's triumphant shears,  
Your yellow heads are cut away,  
It seems your reign is o'er.  
By noon you raise a sea of stars  
More golden than before.

## *The Lame Boy and the Fairy*

(To the rhythm of Chopin's Berceuse)

A lame boy  
Met a fairy  
In a meadow  
Where the bells grow.

And the fairy  
Kissed him gaily.

And the fairy  
Gave him friendship,  
Gave him healing,  
Gave him wings.

"All the fashions  
I will give you.  
You will fly, dear,  
All the long year.

"Wings of springtime,  
Wings of summer,  
Wings of autumn,  
Wings of winter!

"Here is  
A dress for springtime."  
And she gave him  
A dress of grasses,  
Orchard blossoms,  
Wild-flowers found in  
Mountain passes,  
*Shoes of song and*  
*Wings of rhyme.*





“Here is  
A dress for summer.”  
And she gave him  
A hat of sunflowers,  
A suit of poppies,  
Clover, daisies,  
All from wheat-sheaves  
In harvest time;  
*Shoes of song and*  
*Wings of rhyme.*

“Here is  
A dress for autumn.”  
And she gave him  
A suit of red haw,  
Hickory, apple,  
Elder, pawpaw,  
Maple, hazel,  
Elm and grape leaves,  
And blue  
And white  
Cloaks of smoke,  
And veils of sunlight,  
From the Indian summer prime!  
*Shoes of song and*  
*Wings of rhyme.*

“Here is  
A dress for winter.”  
And she gave him  
A polar bear suit,  
And he heard the  
Christmas horns toot,  
And she gave him

Green festoons and  
Red balloons and  
All the sweet cakes  
And the snowflakes  
Of Christmas time,  
*Shoes of song and*  
*Wings of rhyme.*

And the fairy  
Kept him laughing,  
Led him dancing,  
Kept him climbing  
On the hilltops  
Toward the moon.

“We shall see silver ships.  
We shall see singing ships,  
Valleys of spray today,  
Mountains of foam.  
We have been long away,  
Far from our wonderland.  
Here come the ships of love  
Taking us home.

“Who are our captains bold?  
They are the saints of old.  
One is Saint Christopher.  
He takes your hand.  
He leads the cloudy fleet.  
He gives us bread and meat.  
His is our ship till  
We reach our dear land.

“Where is our house to be?  
Far in the ether sea.

There where the North Star  
Is moored in the deep.  
Sleepy old comets nod  
There on the silver sod.  
Sleepy young fairy flowers  
Laugh in their sleep.

“A hundred years  
And  
A day,  
There we will fly  
And play  
*I-spy* and *cross-tag*.  
And meet on the highway,  
And call to the game  
Little Red Riding Hood,  
Goldilocks, Santa Claus,  
Every beloved  
And heart-shaking name.”

And the lame child  
And the fairy  
Journeyed far, far  
To the North Star.

## *The Fairy from the Apple-Seed*

O apple-seed I planted in a silly shallow place  
In a bowl of wrought silver, with Sangamon earth within  
it,

O baby tree that came, without an apple on it,  
A tree that grew a tiny height, but thickened on apace,  
With bossy glossy arms, and leaves of trembling lace.

One night the trunk was rent, and the heavy bowl rocked  
round,

The boughs were bending here and there, with a curious  
locust sound,

And a tiny dryad came, from out the doll tree,

And held the boughs in ivory hands,

And waved her black hair round,

And climbed, and ate with merry words

The sudden fruit it bore.

And in the leaves she hides and sings

And guards my study door.

She guards it like a watchdog true

And robbers run away.

For hearts of oak, by flying beauty swayed:—

It is the cross-roads

Resurrection

Parade.

The flags are big, like rainbows flashing round,

They spread like sails, and lift us from the ground,

Star-born ships, that have come in masquerade:—

It is the cross-roads

Resurrection

Parade.



## *Crickets on a Strike*

The foolish queen of fairyland  
From her milk-white throne in a lily-bell,  
Gave command to her cricket-band  
To play for her when the dew-drops fell.

But the cold dew spoiled their instruments  
And they play for the foolish queen no more.  
Instead those sturdy malcontents  
Play sharps and flats in my kitchen floor.



## *Dancing for a Prize*

Three fairies by the Sangamon  
Were dancing for a prize.  
The rascals were alike indeed  
As they danced with drooping eyes.  
I gave the magic acorn  
To the one I loved the best,  
The imp that made me think of her  
My heart's eternal guest,  
My lady of the tea-rose, my lady far away,  
Queen of the fleets of No-Man's-Land  
That sail to old Cathay.  
How did the trifler hint of her?  
Ah, when the dance was done  
They begged me for the acorn,  
Laughing every one.  
Two had eyes of midnight,  
And one had golden eyes,  
And I gave the golden acorn  
To the scamp with golden eyes.  
Confessor Dandelion,  
My priest so gray and wise,  
Whispered when I gave it  
To the girl with golden eyes:  
"She is like your Queen of Glory  
On China's holy strand  
Who drove the coiling dragons  
Like doves before her hand."

## *The King of Yellow Butterflies*

(A Poem Game)

The King of Yellow Butterflies,  
The King of Yellow Butterflies,  
The King of Yellow Butterflies,  
Now orders forth his men.  
He says "The time is almost here  
When violets bloom again."  
Adown the road the fickle rout  
Goes flashing proud and bold,  
Adown the road the fickle rout  
Goes flashing proud and bold,  
Adown the road the fickle rout  
Goes flashing proud and bold,  
They shiver by the shallow pools,  
They shiver by the shallow pools,  
They shiver by the shallow pools,  
And whimper of the cold.  
They drink and drink. A frail pretense!  
They love to pose and preen.  
Each pool is but a looking-glass,  
Where their sweet wings are seen.  
Each pool is but a looking-glass,  
Where their sweet wings are seen.  
Each pool is but a looking-glass,  
Where their sweet wings are seen.  
Gentlemen adventurers! Gypsies every whit!  
They live on what they steal. Their wings  
By briars are frayed a bit.  
Their loves are light. They have no house.  
And if it rains today,  
They'll climb into your cattle-shed,

They'll climb into your cattle-shed,  
They'll climb into your cattle-shed,  
And hide them in the hay,  
And hide them in the hay,  
And hide them in the hay,  
And hide them in the hay.





## *The Potatoes' Dance*

(A Poem Game)

### I

"Down cellar," said the cricket,  
"Down cellar," said the cricket,  
"Down cellar," said the cricket,  
"I saw a ball last night,  
In honor of a lady,  
In honor of a lady,  
In honor of a lady,  
Whose wings were pearly white.  
The breath of bitter weather,  
The breath of bitter weather,  
The breath of bitter weather,  
Had smashed the cellar pane.  
We entertained a drift of leaves,  
We entertained a drift of leaves,  
We entertained a drift of leaves,  
And then of snow and rain.  
But we were dressed for winter,  
But we were dressed for winter,  
But we were dressed for winter,  
And loved to hear it blow  
In honor of the lady,  
In honor of the lady,  
In honor of the lady,  
Who makes potatoes grow,  
Our guest the Irish lady,  
The tiny Irish lady,  
The airy Irish lady,  
Who makes potatoes grow.

## II

“Potatoes were the waiters,  
Potatoes were the waiters,  
Potatoes were the waiters,  
Potatoes were the band,  
Potatoes were the dancers  
Kicking up the sand,  
Kicking up the sand,  
Kicking up the sand,  
Potatoes were the dancers  
Kicking up the sand.  
Their legs were old burnt matches,  
Their legs were old burnt matches,  
Their legs were old burnt matches,  
Their arms were just the same.  
They jigged and whirled and scrambled,  
Jigged and whirled and scrambled,  
Jigged and whirled and scrambled,  
In honor of the dame,  
The noble Irish lady  
Who makes potatoes dance,  
The witty Irish lady,  
The saucy Irish lady,  
The laughing Irish lady  
Who makes potatoes prance.







### III

“There was just one sweet potato.  
He was golden brown and slim.  
The lady loved his dancing,  
The lady loved his dancing,  
The lady loved his dancing,  
She danced all night with him,  
She danced all night with him.  
Alas, he wasn't Irish.  
So when she flew away,  
They threw him in the coal-bin,  
And there he is today,  
Where they cannot hear his sighs  
And his weeping for the lady,  
The glorious Irish lady,  
The beauteous Irish lady,  
Who  
Gives  
Potatoes  
Eyes.”

## *The Sea Serpent Chantey*

### I

There's a snake on the western wave  
And his crest is red.  
He is long as a city street,  
And he eats the dead.  
There's a hole in the bottom of the sea  
Where the snake goes down.  
And he waits in the bottom of the sea  
For the men that drown.

Chorus:—

This is the voice of the sand  
(The sailors understand)  
“There is far more sea than sand,  
There is far more sea than land.  
Yo . . . ho, yo . . . ho.”

*Let the audi-  
ence join in  
the chorus.*

## II

He waits by the door of his cave  
While the ages moan.  
He cracks the ribs of the ships  
With his teeth of stone.  
In his gizzard deep and long  
Much treasure lies.  
Oh, the pearls and the Spanish gold. . . .  
And the idols' eyes. . . .  
Oh, the totem poles . . . the skulls . . .  
The altars cold . . .  
The wedding rings, the dice . . .  
The buoy bells old.  
Chorus:—This is the voice, etc.

### III

Dive, mermaids, with sharp swords  
And cut him through,  
And bring us the idols' eyes  
And the red gold too.  
Lower the grappling hooks  
Good pirate men  
And drag him up by the tongue  
From his deep wet den.  
We will sail to the end of the world,  
We will nail his hide  
To the mainmast of the moon  
In the evening tide.

*Repeat as a  
second chorus  
many times.*

#### IV

Or will you let him live,  
The deep-sea thing,  
With the wrecks of all the world  
In a black wide ring  
By the hole in the bottom of the sea  
Where the snake goes down,  
Where he waits in the bottom of the sea  
For the men that drown?

Chorus:—This is the voice, etc.



## *An Indian Summer Day on the Prairie*

### IN THE BEGINNING

The sun is a huntress young,  
The sun is a red, red joy,  
The sun is an Indian girl,  
Of the tribe of the Illinois.

### MID-MORNING

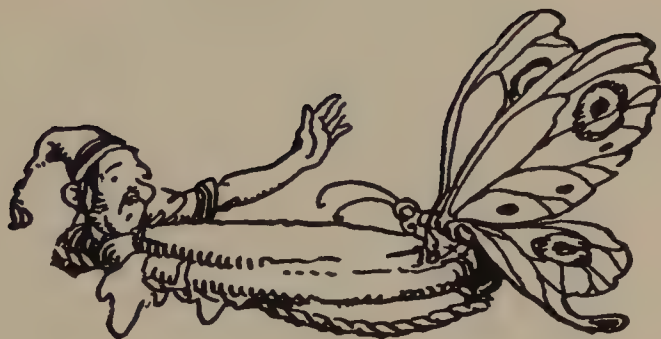
The sun is a smoldering fire,  
That creeps through the high gray plain,  
And leaves not a bush of cloud  
To blossom with flowers of rain.

### NOON

The sun is a wounded deer,  
That treads pale grass in the skies,  
Shaking his golden horns,  
Flashing his baleful eyes.

### SUNSET

The sun is an eagle old,  
There in the windless west.  
Atop of the spirit-cliffs  
He builds him a crimson nest.



PART II  
MOON POEMS



## *The Haughty Snail-King*

(What Uncle William Told the Children)

Twelve snails went walking after night.  
They'd creep an inch or so,  
Then stop and bug their eyes  
And blow.  
Some folks . . . are . . . deadly . . . slow.  
Twelve snails went walking yestereve,  
Led by their fat old king.  
They were so dull their princeling had  
No sceptre, robe or ring—  
Only a paper cap to wear  
When nightly journeying.

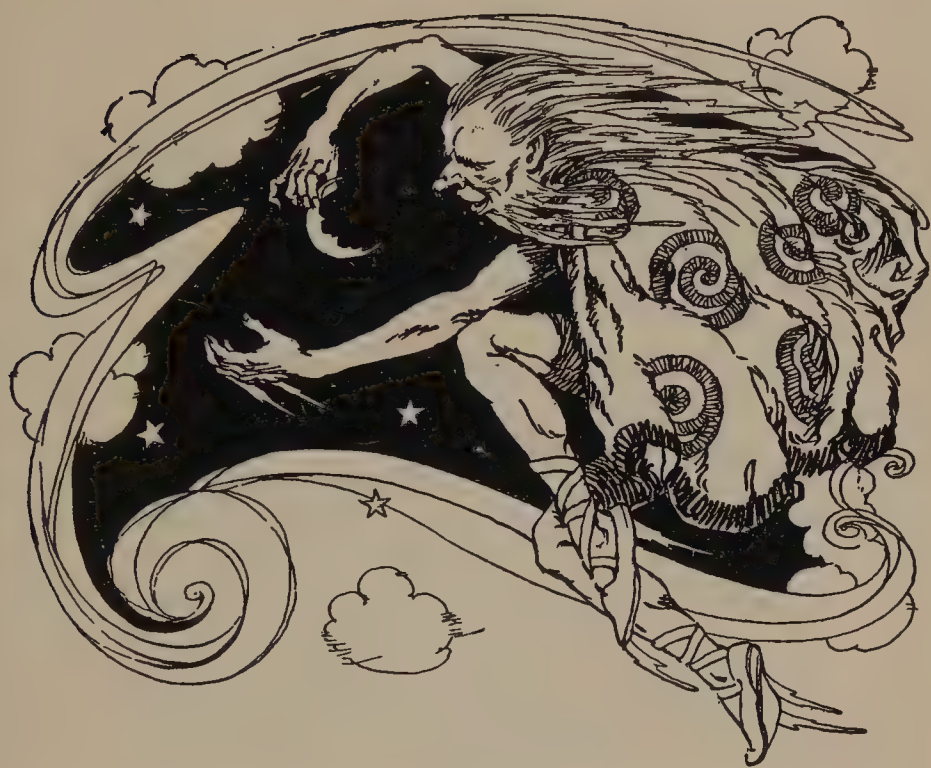
This king-snail said: "I feel a thought  
Within . . . It blossoms soon. . . .  
O little courtiers of mine, . . .  
I crave a pretty boon. . . .  
Oh, yes . . . (High thoughts with effort come  
And well-bred snails are ALMOST dumb.)  
"I wish I had a yellow crown  
As glistening . . . as . . . the moon."

## *The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky*

(What the Little Girl Said)

The Moon's the North Wind's cooky.  
He bites it, day by day,  
Until there's but a rim of scraps  
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker.  
He kneads clouds in his den,  
And bakes a crisp new moon *that . . . greedy*  
*North . . . Wind . . . eats . . . again!*







### *What the Rattlesnake Said*

The moon's a little prairie-dog.  
He shivers through the night.  
He sits upon his hill and cries  
For fear that *I* will bite.

The sun's a broncho. He's afraid  
Like every other thing,  
And trembles, morning, noon and night,  
Lest *I* should spring, and sting.

## *Yet Gentle Will the Griffin Be*

(What Grandpa Told the Children)

The moon? It is a griffin's egg,  
Hatching to-morrow night.  
And how the little boys will watch  
With shouting and delight  
To see him break the shell and stretch  
And creep across the sky.  
The boys will laugh. The little girls,  
I fear, may hide and cry.  
Yet gentle will the griffin be,  
Most decorous and fat,  
And walk up to the Milky Way  
And lap it like a cat.





## *Drying Their Wings*

(What the Carpenter Said)

The moon's a cottage with a door.  
Some folks can see it plain.  
Look, you may catch a glint of light,  
A sparkle through the pane,  
Showing the place is brighter still  
Within, though bright without.  
There, at a cosy open fire  
Strange babes are grouped about.  
The children of the wind and tide—  
The urchins of the sky,  
Drying their wings from storms and things  
So they again can fly.

### *What the Clown Said*

“The moon’s a paper jumping hoop,”  
Went on the circus clown,  
“A film of gilded nonsense  
For the games of Angel-town.

“If I could break those horses  
That gallop through my sleep,  
I’d reach that aggravating hoop  
And make my finest leap.

“I climb upon their backs, and ride,  
But always slip too soon . . .  
And fall and wake, when just one mile  
Remains to reach the moon.”







### *The Old Horse in the City*

The moon's a peck of corn. It lies  
Heaped up for me to eat.  
I wish that I might climb the path  
And taste that supper sweet.

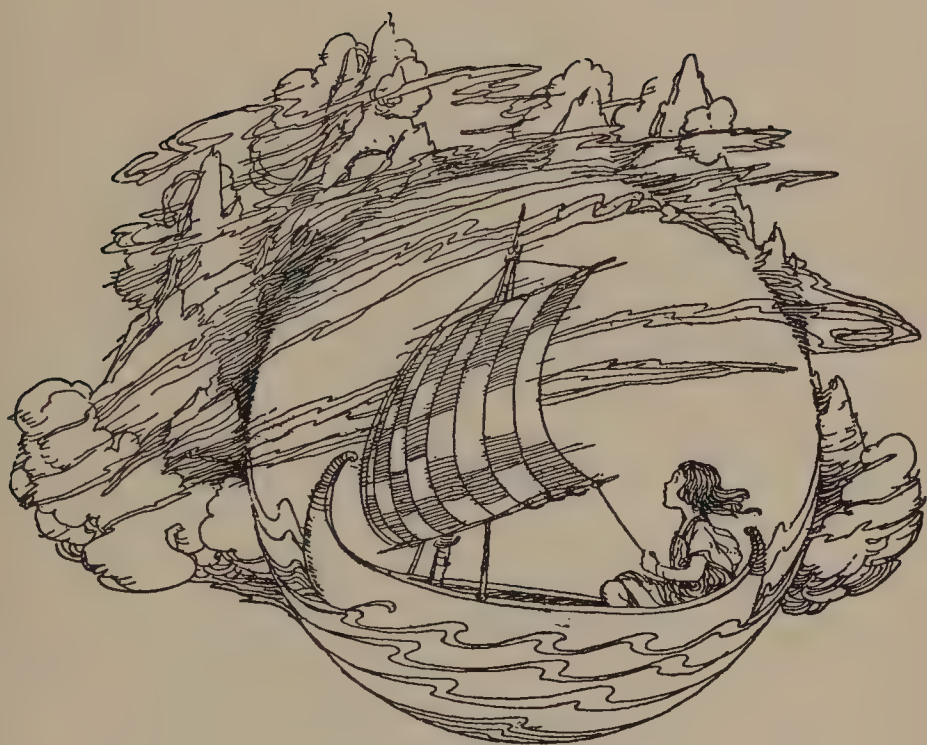
Men feed me straw and scanty grain  
And beat me till I'm sore.  
Some day I'll break the halter-rope  
And smash the stable-door,

Run down the street and mount the hill  
Just as the corn appears.  
I've seen it rise at certain times  
For years and years and years.

## *The Path in the Sky*

I sailed a little shallop  
Upon a pretty sea  
In blue and hazy mountains,  
Scarce mountains unto me;  
Their summits lost in wonder,  
They wrapped the lake around,  
And when my shallop landed  
I trod on a vague ground,

And climbed and climbed toward heaven,  
Though scarce before my feet  
I found one step unveiled there  
The blue-haze vast, complete,  
Until I came to Zion  
The gravel paths of God,  
My endless trail pierced the thick veil  
To flaming flowers and sod.  
I rested, looked behind me  
And saw where I had been.  
*My little lake. It was the moon.*  
Sky-mountains closed it in.





### *What the Snow Man Said*

The Moon's a snowball. See the drifts  
Of white that cross the sphere.  
The Moon's a snowball, melted down  
A dozen times a year.

Yet rolled again in hot July  
When all my days are done  
And cool to greet the weary eye  
After the scorching sun.

The Moon's a piece of winter fair  
Renewed the year around,  
Behold it, deathless and unstained,  
Above the grimy ground!

It rolls on high so brave and white  
Where the clear air-rivers flow,  
Proclaiming Christmas all the time  
And the glory of the snow!

*What the Scarecrow Said*

The dim-winged spirits of the night  
Do fear and serve me well.  
They creep from out the hedges of  
The garden where I dwell.

I wave my arms across the walk.  
The troops obey the sign,  
And bring me shimmering shadow-robcs  
And cups of cowslip-wine.

Then dig a treasure called the moon,  
A very precious thing,  
And keep it in the air for me  
Because I am a King.

*What Grandpa Mouse Said*

The moon's a holy owl-queen.  
She keeps them in a jar  
Under her arm till evening,  
Then sallies forth to war.

She pours the owls upon us.  
They hoot with horrid noise  
And eat the naughty mousie-girls  
And wicked mousie-boys.

So climb the moonvine every night  
And to the owl-queen pray:  
Leave good green cheese by moonlit trees  
For her to take away.

*What the Forester Said*

The moon is but a candle-glow  
That flickers thro' the gloom:  
The starry space, a castle hall:  
And Earth, the children's room,  
Where all night long the old trees stand  
To watch the streams asleep:  
Grandmothers guarding trundle-beds:  
Good shepherds guarding sheep.



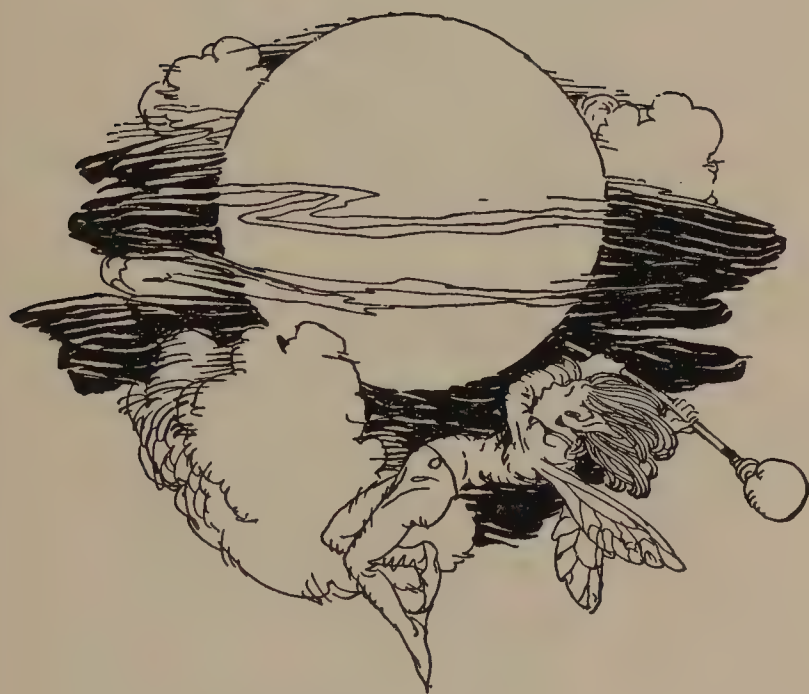
## *On the Garden Wall*

Oh, once I walked a garden  
In dreams. 'Twas yellow grass.  
And many orange-trees grew there  
In sand as white as glass.  
The curving, wide wall-border  
Was marble, like the snow.  
I walked that wall a fairy-prince  
And, pacing quaint and slow,  
Beside me were my pages,  
Two giant, friendly birds.  
Half swan they were, half peacock.  
They spake in courtier-words.  
Their inner wings a chariot,  
Their outer wings for flight,  
They lifted me from dreamland.  
We bade those trees good-night.  
Swiftly above the stars we rode.  
I looked below me soon.  
The white-walled garden I had ruled  
Was one lone flower—the moon.

*What the Gray-Winged Fairy Said*

The moon's a gong, hung in the wild,  
Whose song the fays hold dear.  
Of course you do not hear it, child.  
It takes a FAIRY ear.

The full moon is a splendid gong  
That beats as night grows still.  
It sounds above the evening song  
Of dove or whippoorwill.





## *A Net to Snare the Moonlight*

(What the Man of Faith Said)

The dew, the rain and moonlight  
All prove our Father's mind.  
The dew, the rain and moonlight  
Descend to bless mankind.

Come, let us see that all men  
Have land to catch the rain,  
Have grass to snare the spheres of dew,  
And fields spread for the grain.

Yea, we would give to each poor man  
Ripe wheat and poppies red,—  
A peaceful place at evening  
With the stars just overhead:

A net to snare the moonlight,  
A sod spread to the sun,  
A place of toil by daytime,  
Of dreams when toil is done.





PART III

STORIES AND HEROES







### *The Ghost of the Buffaloes*

Last night at black midnight I woke with a cry,  
The windows were shaking, there was thunder on high,  
The floor was atremble, the door was ajar,  
White fires, crimson fires, shone from afar.  
I rushed to the dooryard. The city was gone.  
My home was a hut without orchard or lawn.  
It was mud-smear and logs near a whispering stream,  
Nothing else built by man could I see in my dream . . .  
Then . . .

Ghost-kings came headlong, row upon row,  
Gods of the Indians, torches aglow.

They mounted the bear and the elk and the deer,  
And eagles gigantic, aged and sere,  
They rode long-horn cattle, they cried "A-la-la."  
They lifted the knife, the bow, and the spear,  
They lifted ghost-torches from dead fires below,  
The midnight made grand with the cry "A-la-la."  
The midnight made grand with a red-god charge,  
A red-god show,  
A red-god show,  
"A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."



With bodies like bronze, and terrible eyes  
Came the rank and the file, with catamount cries,  
Gibbering, yipping, with hollow-skull clacks,  
Riding white bronchos with skeleton backs,  
Scalp-hunters, beaded and spangled and bad,  
Naked and lustful and foaming and mad,  
Flashing primeval demoniac scorn,  
Blood-thirst and pomp amid darkness reborn,  
Power and glory that sleep in the grass  
While the winds and the snows and the great rains pass.



They crossed the gray river, thousands abreast,  
They rode in infinite lines to the west,  
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,  
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,  
The sky was their goal where the star-flags were furled,  
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.  
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,  
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.



And the wind crept by  
Alone, unkempt, unsatisfied,  
The wind cried and cried—  
Muttered of massacres long past,  
Buffaloes in shambles vast . . .  
An owl said: "Hark, what is a-wing?"  
I heard a cricket carolling,  
I heard a cricket carolling,  
I heard a cricket carolling.

Then . . .  
Snuffing the lightning that crashed from on high  
Rose royal old buffaloes, row upon row.  
The lords of the prairie came galloping by.  
And I cried in my heart "A-la-la, a-la-la,  
A red-god show,  
A red-god show,  
A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

Buffaloes, buffaloes; thousands abreast,  
A scourge and amazement, they swept to the west.  
With black bobbing noses, with red rolling tongues,  
Coughing forth steam from their leather-wrapped lungs,  
Cows with their calves, bulls big and vain,  
Goring the laggards, shaking the mane,  
Stamping flint feet, flashing moon eyes.  
Pompous and owlsh, shaggy and wise.



Like sea-cliffs and caves resounded their ranks  
With shoulders like waves, and undulant flanks.  
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,  
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,  
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,  
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.  
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,  
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.



I heard a cricket's cymbals play,  
A scarecrow lightly flapped his rags,  
And a pan that hung by his shoulder rang,  
Rattled and thumped in a listless way,  
And now the wind in the chimney sang,  
The wind in the chimney,  
The wind in the chimney,  
The wind in the chimney,  
Seemed to say:—  
“Dream, boy, dream,  
If you anywise can.  
To dream is the work  
Of beast or man.  
Life is the west-going dream-storms' breath,  
Life is a dream, the sigh of the skies,  
The breath of the stars, that nod on their pillows  
With their golden hair mussed over their eyes.”



The locust played on his musical wing,  
Sang to his mate of love's delight.  
I heard the whippoorwill's soft fret.  
I heard a cricket carolling,  
I heard a cricket carolling,  
I heard a cricket say: "Good-night, good-night,  
Good-night, good-night, . . . good-night."



## *The Broncho That Would Not Be Broken*

A little colt—broncho, loaned to the farm  
To be broken in time without fury or harm,  
Yet black crows flew past you, shouting alarm,  
Calling "Beware," with lugubrious singing . . .  
The butterflies there in the bush were romancing,  
The smell of the grass caught your soul in a trance,  
So why be a-fearing the spurs and the traces,  
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing?

You were born with the pride of the lords great and olden  
Who danced, through the ages, in corridors golden.  
In all the wide farm-place the person most human.  
You spoke out so plainly with squealing and capering,  
With whinnying, snorting, contorting and prancing,  
As you dodged your pursuers, looking askance,  
With Greek-footed figures, and Parthenon paces,  
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

The grasshoppers cheered. "Keep whirling," they said.  
The insolent sparrows called from the shed  
"If men will not laugh, make them wish they were dead."  
But arch were your thoughts, all malice displacing,  
Though the horse-killers came, with snake-whips  
    advancing.  
You bantered and cantered away your last chance.  
And they scourged you, with Hell in their speech and  
    their faces,  
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.





"Nobody cares for you," rattled the crows,  
As you dragged the whole reaper, next day, down the  
rows.

The three mules held back, yet you danced on your toes.  
You pulled like a racer, and kept the mules chasing.  
You tangled the harness with bright eyes side-glancing,  
While the drunk driver bled you—a pole for a lance—  
And the giant mules bit at you—keeping their places.  
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

In that last afternoon your boyish heart broke.  
The hot wind came down like a sledge-hammer stroke.  
The blood-sucking flies to a rare feast awoke.  
And they searched out your wounds, your death-warrant  
tracing.  
And the merciful men, their religion enhancing,  
Stopped the red reaper, to give you a chance.  
Then you died on the prairie, and scorned all disgraces,  
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

SOUVENIR OF GREAT BEND, KANSAS.



## *In Praise of Johnny Appleseed \**

(Born 1775; died 1847)

### I. OVER THE APPALACHIAN BARRICADE

In the days of President Washington,  
The glory of the nations,  
Dust and ashes,  
Snow and sleet,  
And hay and oats and wheat,  
Blew west,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
Found the glades of rotting leaves, the soft deer-pastures,  
The farms of the far-off future  
In the forest.  
Colts jumped the fence,

*To be read  
like old leaves  
on the elm  
tree of Time,  
Sifting soft  
winds with  
sentence and  
rhyme.*

\* The best account of John Chapman's career, under the name "Johnny Appleseed," is to be found in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, November, 1871.

Snorting, ramping, snapping, sniffing,  
With gastronomic calculations,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
The east walls of our citadel,  
And turned to gold-horned unicorns,  
Feasting in the dim, volunteer farms of the forest.  
Stripedest, kickingest kittens escaped,  
Caterwauling "Yankee Doodle Dandy."  
Renounced their poor relations,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
And turned to tiny tigers  
In the humorous forest.  
Chickens escaped  
From farmyard congregations,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
And turned to amber trumpets  
On the ramparts of our Hoosiers' nest and citadel,  
Millennial heralds  
Of the foggy mazy forest.  
Pigs broke loose, scrambled west,  
Scorned their loathsome stations,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
Turned to roaming, foaming wild boars  
Of the forest.  
The smallest, blindest puppies toddled west  
While their eyes were coming open,  
And, with misty observations,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
Barked, barked, barked  
At the glow-worms and the marsh lights and the light-  
ning-bugs,  
And turned to ravening wolves  
Of the forest.  
Crazy parrots and canaries flew west,

Drunk on May-time revelations,  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
And turned to delirious, flower-dressed fairies  
Of the lazy forest.  
Haughtiest swans and peacocks swept west,  
And, despite soft derivations,  
Crossed the Appalachians.  
And turned to blazing warrior souls  
Of the forest,  
Singing the ways  
Of the Ancient of Days.  
And the "Old Continentals  
In their ragged regimentals,"  
With bard's imaginations,  
Crossed the Appalachians.  
And  
A boy  
Blew west,  
And with prayers and incantations,  
And with "Yankee Doodle Dandy,"  
Crossed the Appalachians,  
And was "young John Chapman,"  
Then  
"Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,"  
Chief of the fastnesses, dappled and vast,  
In a pack on his back,  
In a deer-hide sack,  
The beautiful orchards of the past,  
The ghosts of all the forests and the groves—  
In that pack on his back,  
In that talisman sack,  
To-morrow's peaches, pears, and cherries,  
To-morrow's grapes and red raspberries,  
Seeds and tree-souls, precious things,



Feathered with microscopic wings,  
All the outdoors the child heart knows,  
And the apple, green, red, and white,  
Sun of his day and his night—  
The apple allied to the thorn,  
Child of the rose.  
Porches untrod of forest houses  
All before him, all day long,  
“Yankee Doodle” his marching song;  
And the evening breeze  
Joined his psalms of praise  
As he sang the ways  
Of the Ancient of Days.  
Leaving behind august Virginia,  
Proud Massachusetts, and proud Maine.  
Planting the trees that would march and train  
On, in his name to the great Pacific,  
Like Birnam wood to Dunsinane,  
Johnny Appleseed swept on,  
Every shackle gone,  
Loving every sloshy brake,  
Loving every skunk and snake,  
Loving every leathery weed,  
Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,  
Master and ruler of the unicorn-ramping forest,  
The tiger-mewing forest,  
The rooster-trumpeting, boar-foaming, wolf-ravening  
forest,  
The spirit-haunted, fairy-enchanted forest,  
Stupendous and endless,  
Searching its perilous ways  
In the name of the Ancient of Days.



## II. THE INDIANS WORSHIP HIM, BUT HE HURRIES ON

Painted kings in the midst of the clearing  
Heard him asking his friends the eagles  
To guard each planted seed and seedling.  
Then he was a god, to the red man's dreaming;  
Then the chiefs brought treasures grotesque and fair,—  
Magical trinkets and pipes and guns,  
Beads and furs from their medicine-lair,—  
Stuck holy feathers in his hair.  
Hailed him with austere delight.  
The orchard god was their guest through the night.

While the late snow blew from bleak Lake Erie,  
Scourging rock and river and reed,  
All night long they made great medicine  
For Jonathan Chapman,  
Johnny Appleseed,  
Johnny Appleseed;  
And as though his heart were a wind-blown wheat  
sheaf,

As though his heart were a new built nest,  
As though their heaven house were his breast,  
In swept the snowbirds singing glory.  
And I hear his bird heart beat its story,  
Hear yet how the ghost of the forest shivers,  
Hear yet the cry of the gray, old orchards,  
Dim and decaying by the rivers,  
And the timid wings of the bird-ghosts beating,  
And the ghosts of the tom-toms beating, beating.

But he left their wigwams and their love.  
By the hour of dawn he was proud and stark,  
Kissed the Indian babes with a sigh,  
Went forth to live on roots and bark,  
Sleep in the trees, while the years howled by.  
Calling the catamounts by name,  
And buffalo bulls no hand could tame.  
Slaying never a living creature,  
Joining the birds in every game,  
With the gorgeous turkey gobblers mocking,  
With the lean-necked eagles boxing and shouting;  
Sticking their feathers in his hair,—  
Turkey feathers,  
Eagle feathers,  
Trading hearts with all beasts and weathers  
He swept on, winged and wonder-crested,  
Bare-armed, barefooted, and bare-breasted.  
The maples, shedding their spinning seeds,  
Called to his appleseeds in the ground,  
Vast chestnut-trees, with their butterfly nations,  
Called to his seeds without a sound.  
And the chipmunk turned a “summerset.”  
And the foxes danced the Virginia reel;  
Hawthorn and crab-thorn bent, rain-wet,

*While you  
read, hear  
the hoof-  
beats of deer  
in the snow.  
And see, by  
their track,  
bleeding  
footprints  
we know.*

*While you  
read, see  
conventions of  
deer go by.  
The bucks  
toss their  
horns, the  
fuzzy fawns  
fly.*

And dropped their flowers in his night-black hair;  
And the soft fawns stopped for his perorations;  
And his black eyes shone through the forest-gleam,  
And he plunged young hands into new-turned earth,  
And prayed dear orchard boughs into birth;  
And he ran with the rabbit and slept with the stream,  
And he ran with the rabbit and slept with the stream,  
And he ran with the rabbit and slept with the stream.  
And so for us he made great medicine,  
And so for us he made great medicine,  
And so for us he made great medicine.  
In the days of President Washington.



### III. JOHNNY APPLESEED'S OLD AGE

Long, long after,  
When settlers put up beam and rafter,  
They asked of the birds: "Who gave this fruit?  
Who watched this fence till the seeds took root?  
Who gave these boughs?" They asked the sky,  
And there was no reply.

But the robin might have said,  
"To the farthest West he has followed the  
sun,

His life and his empire just begun."

Self-scourged, like a monk, with a throne  
for wages,

Stripped, like the iron-souled Hindu sages,  
Draped like a statue, in strings like a scare-  
crow,

His helmet-hat an old tin pan,

But worn in the love of the heart of man,  
More sane than the helm of Tamerlane!

*To be read  
like faint  
hoof-beats  
of fawns  
long gone  
From re-  
spectable  
pasture, and  
park and  
lawn,  
And heart-  
beats of  
fawns that  
are coming  
again  
When the  
forest, once  
more, is the  
master of  
men.*

Hairy Ainu, wild man of Borneo, Robinson Crusoe—  
Johnny Appleseed!  
And the robin might have said,  
“Sowing, he goes to the far, new West,  
With the apple, the sun of his burning breast—  
The apple allied to the thorn,  
Child of the rose.”

Washington buried in Virginia,  
Jackson buried in Tennessee,  
Young Lincoln, brooding in Illinois,  
And Johnny Appleseed, priestly and free,  
Knotted and gnarled, past seventy years,  
Still planted on in the woods alone.  
Ohio and young Indiana—  
These were his wide altar-stone,  
Where still he burnt out flesh and bone.  
Twenty days ahead of the Indian, twenty years ahead of  
the white man,  
At last the Indian overtook him, at last the Indian  
hurried past him;  
At last the white man overtook him, at last the white man  
hurried past him;  
At last his own trees overtook him, at last his own trees  
hurried past him.  
Many cats were tame again,  
Many ponies tame again,  
Many pigs were tame again,  
Many canaries tame again;  
And the real frontier was his sunburnt breast.  
From the fiery core of that apple, the earth,  
Sprang apple-amaranths divine.  
Love's orchards climbed to the heavens of the West  
And snowed the earthly sod with flowers.

Farm hands from the terraces of the blest  
Danced on the mists with their ladies fine;  
And Johnny Appleseed laughed with his dreams,  
And swam once more the ice-cold streams.  
And the doves of the spirit swept through the hours,  
With doom-calls, love-calls, death-calls, dream-calls;  
And Johnny Appleseed, all that year,  
Lifted his hands to the farm-filled sky,  
To the apple-harvesters busy on high;  
And so once more his youth began,  
And so for us he made great medicine—  
Johnny Appleseed, medicine-man.

Then

The sun was their turned-up broken barrel,  
Out of which their juicy apples rolled,  
Down the repeated terraces,  
Thumping across the gold,  
An angel in each apple that touched the forest mold,  
A ballot-box in each apple,  
A state capital in each apple,  
Great high schools, great colleges,  
All America in each apple,  
Each red, rich, round, and bouncing moon  
That touched the forest mold.  
Like scrolls and rolled-up flags of silk,  
He saw the fruits unfold,  
And all our expectations in one wild-flower written  
dream.

Confusion, and death-sweetness, and a thicket of crab-  
thorns!

Heart of a hundred midnights, heart of the merciful  
morns.

Heaven's boughs bent down with their alchemy,  
Perfumed airs, and thoughts of wonder.



And the dew on the grass and his own cold tears  
Were one in brooding mystery,  
Though death's loud thunder came upon him,  
Though death's loud thunder struck him down—  
The boughs and the proud thoughts swept through the  
thunder,  
Till he saw our wide nation, each State a flower,  
Each petal a park for holy feet,  
With wild fawns merry on every street,  
With wild fawns merry on every street,  
The vista of ten thousand years, flower-lighted and  
complete.

Hear the lazy weeds murmuring, bays and rivers whisper-  
ing,  
From Michigan to Texas, California to Maine;  
Listen to the eagles screaming, calling,  
"Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,"  
There by the doors of old Fort Wayne.

In the four-poster bed Johnny Appleseed built,  
Autumn rains were the curtains, autumn leaves were the  
quilt.  
He laid him down sweetly, and slept through the night,  
Like a stone washed white,  
There by the doors of old Fort Wayne.



## *The Congo* \*

### A STUDY OF THE NEGRO RACE

(Being a memorial to Ray Eldred, a Disciple missionary  
of the Congo River)

#### I. THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,  
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,  
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the  
table,

*A deep rolling  
bass.*

Pounded on the table,  
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,  
Hard as they were able,  
Boom, boom, BOOM,  
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,  
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.  
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.  
I could not turn from their revel in derision.

\*This poem, particularly the third section, was suggested by an allusion in a sermon by my pastor, F. W. Burnham, to the heroic life and death of Ray Eldred. Eldred was a missionary of the Disciples of Christ who perished while swimming a treacherous branch of the Congo. See *A Master Builder on the Congo*, by Andrew F. Henesey, published by Fleming H. Revell.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING *More deliberate.*  
THROUGH THE BLACK, *Solemnly*  
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A *chanted.*  
GOLDEN TRACK.

Then along that riverbank  
A thousand miles  
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;  
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song  
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan *A rapidly*  
gong. *piling climax*  
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and *of speed and*  
the fifes of the warriors, *racket.*  
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-  
doctors,

"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,  
Harry the uplands,  
Steal all the cattle,  
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,  
Bing.

Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"  
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune  
From the mouth of the Congo  
To the Mountains of the Moon.

*With a philo-  
sophic pause.*

Death is an Elephant,  
Torch-eyed and horrible,  
Foam-flanked and terrible.

*Shrilly and  
with a heavily  
accented metre.*

BOOM, steal the pygmies,  
BOOM, kill the Arabs,  
BOOM, kill the white men,  
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.

Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost *Like the wind*  
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host. *in the chimney.*

Hear how the demons chuckle and yell  
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.  
Listen to the creepy proclamation,  
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,  
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,  
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies  
play:—

“Be careful what you do,  
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,  
And all of the other  
Gods of the Congo,  
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,  
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,  
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.”

*All the “o”  
sounds very  
golden. Heavy  
accents very  
heavy. Light  
accents very  
light. Last line  
whispered.*

## II. THEIR IRREPRESSIBLE HIGH SPIRITS

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call      *Rather shrill  
and high.*  
Danced the juba in their gambling hall  
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,  
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down  
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING      *Read exactly as  
in first section.*

THROUGH THE BLACK,

CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A

GOLDEN TRACK.

A Negro fairyland swung into view,      *Lay emphasis  
on the delicate  
ideas. Keep as  
light-footed as  
possible.*  
A minstrel river  
Where dreams come true.  
The ebony palace soared on high  
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.  
The inlaid porches and casements shone  
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.  
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore  
At the baboon butler in the agate door,  
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band  
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came      *With  
pomposity.*  
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,  
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust  
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.  
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call  
And danced the juba from wall to wall.

But the witch-men suddenly stilled the  
throng

With a stern cold glare, and a stern old  
song:—

*With a great  
deliberation  
and ghostliness.*

“Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.” . . .

Just then from the doorway, as fat as  
shots,

*With over-  
whelming as-  
surance, good  
cheer, and  
pomp.*

Came the cake-walk princes in their long  
red coats,

Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,

And tall silk hats that were red as wine.

And they pranced with their butterfly  
partners there,

*With growing  
speed and  
sharply marked  
dance-rhythm.*

Coal-black maidens with pearls in their  
hair,

Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,

And bells on their ankles and little black feet.

And the couples railed at the chant and the frown

Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.

(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while

That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

The cake-walk royalty then began

To walk for a cake that was tall as a man

To the tune of “Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,”

While the witch-men laughed, with a  
sinister air,

*With a touch  
of Negro dia-  
lect, and  
as rapidly as  
possible toward  
the end.*

And sang with the scalawags prancing  
there:—

“Walk with care, walk with care,  
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,  
And all of the other Gods of the Congo,  
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.  
Beware, beware, walk with care,  
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.  
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.  
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.  
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,  
BOOM.”

(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth *Slow philo-  
sophic calm.*  
while

That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

### III. THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION

A good old Negro in the slums of the town  
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.  
Howled at a brother for his low-down  
ways,  
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.  
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out  
Starting the jubilee revival shout.  
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,  
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs,  
And they all repented, a thousand strong  
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong  
And slammed with their hymn books till they shook  
the room  
With "glory, glory, glory,"  
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."  
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING *Heavy bass.*  
THROUGH THE BLACK, *With a literal*  
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH *imitation of*  
A GOLDEN TRACK. *camp-meeting*  
*racket, and*  
*trance.*  
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil  
And showed the Apostles with their coats of mail.  
In bright white steel they were seated round  
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.  
And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high  
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—  
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;  
Never again will he hoo-doo you,  
Never again will he hoo-doo you."  
*Exactly as in*  
*the first section.*  
*Begin with*  
*terror and*  
*power, end with*  
*joy.*  
*Sung to the*  
*tune of "Hark,*  
*ten thousand*  
*harps and*  
*voices."*

Then along that river, a thousand miles  
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.  
Pioneer angels cleared the way  
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,  
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.  
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.  
There, where the wild ghost-gods had  
                    wailed

*With growing  
deliberation  
and joy.*

A million boats of the angels sailed  
With oars of silver, and prows of blue  
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.  
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.  
Oh, a singing wind swept the Negro nation  
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—  
"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.  
Never again will he hoo-doo you.  
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

*In a rather  
high key—as  
delicately as  
possible.*

*To the tune of  
"Hark, ten  
thousand harps  
and voices."*

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,  
And only the vulture dared again  
By the far, lone mountains of the moon  
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—  
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,  
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.  
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo  
                    . . . you."

*Dying down  
into a pene-  
trating,  
terrified  
whisper.*



## *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state  
That here at midnight, in our little town  
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,  
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards  
He lingers where his children used to play,  
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones  
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,  
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl  
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,  
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.  
He is among us:—as in times before!  
And we who toss and lie awake for long  
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.  
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?  
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,  
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.  
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.  
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now  
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn  
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:  
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,  
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,  
That all his hours of travail here for men  
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace  
That he may sleep upon his hill again?





*From the Litany of the Heroes*

Would that we had the fortunes of Columbus.  
Sailing his caravels a trackless way,  
He found a Universe—he sought Cathay.  
God give such dawns as when, his venture o'er,  
'The Sailor looked upon San Salvador.  
God lead us past the setting of the sun  
To wizard islands, of august surprise;  
God make our blunders wise.

Would I might wake St. Francis in you  
all,  
Brother of birds and trees, God's  
Troubadour,  
Blinded with weeping for the sad and poor;  
Our wealth undone, all strict Franciscan men,  
Come, let us chant the canticle again  
Of mother earth and the enduring sun.  
God make each soul the lonely leper's slave;  
God make us saints, and brave.







Would I might wake in you the whirlwind soul  
Of Michelangelo, who hewed the stone  
And Night and Day revealed, whose arm alone  
Could draw the face of God, the titan high  
Whose genius smote like lightning from the sky—  
And shall he mold like dead leaves in the grave?  
Nay, he is in us! Let us dare and dare.  
God help us to be brave.

Would that in body and spirit Shakespeare came  
Visible emperor of the deeds of Time,  
With Justice still the genius of his rhyme,  
Giving each man his due, each passion grace,  
Impartial as the rain from Heaven's face  
Or sunshine from the Heaven-enthroned sun.  
Sweet Swan of Avon, come to us again.  
Teach us to write, and writing, to be men.

Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you  
all,  
That which is gendered in the wilder-  
ness  
From lonely prairies and God's tenderness.  
Imperial soul, star of a weedy stream,  
Born where the ghosts of buffaloes still gleam,  
Whose spirit hoof-beats storm above his grave,  
Above that breast of earth and prairie-fire—  
Fire that freed the slave.

Nay, I would have you grand, and still forgotten,  
Hid like the stars at noon, as he who set  
The Egyptian magic of man's alphabet;  
Or that Egyptian, first to dream in pain  
That dauntless souls cannot by death be slain—  
Conquering for all men then, the fateful grave.  
God keep us hid, yet vaster far than death.  
God help us to be brave.

## *The Kallyope Yell*

(To be given in the peculiar whispered manner of the University  
of Kansas "Jay-Hawk Yell")

### I

Proud men  
Eternally  
Go about,  
Slander me,  
Call me the "Calliope,"  
Sizz. . . .  
Fizz. . . .

### II

I am the Gutter Dream,  
Tune-maker, born of steam,  
Tooting joy, tooting hope.  
I am the Kallyope,  
Car called the Kallyope.

Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
See the flags: snow-white tent,  
See the bear and elephant,  
See the monkey jump the rope,  
Listen to the Kallyope, Kallyope, Kallyope!  
Soul of the rhinoceros  
And the hippopotamus  
(Listen to the lion roar!)  
Jaguar, cockatoot,  
Loons, owls,  
Hoot, Hoot.  
Listen to the lion roar,  
Listen to the lion roar,  
Listen to the lion R-O-A-R!  
Hear the leopard cry for gore,  
Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
Hail the bloody Indian band,  
Hail, all hail the popcorn stand,  
Hail to Barnum's picture there,  
People's idol everywhere,  
Whoop, whoop, whoop, WHOOP!  
Music of the mob am I,  
Circus day's tremendous cry:—  
I am the Kallyope, Kallyope, Kallyope!  
Hoot toot, hoot toot, hoot toot, hoot toot,  
Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
Sizz, fizz. . . .

### III

Born of mobs, born of steam,  
Listen to my golden dream,  
Listen to my golden dream,  
Listen to my G-O-L-D-E-N D-R-E-A-M!  
Whoop whoop whoop whoop WHOOP!  
I will blow the proud folk low,  
Humanize the dour and slow,  
I will shake the proud folk down,  
(Listen to the lion roar!)  
Popcorn crowds shall rule the town—  
Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
Steam shall work melodiously,  
Brotherhood increase.  
You'll see the world and all it holds  
For fifty cents apiece.  
Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
Every day a circus day.

*What?*

Well, *almost* every day.  
Nevermore the sweater's den,  
Nevermore the prison pen.  
Gone the war on land and sea  
That aforetime troubled men.  
Nations all in amity,  
Happy in their plumes arrayed  
In the long bright street parade.  
Bands a-playing every day.

*What?*

Well, *almost* every day.  
I am the Kallyope, Kallyope, Kallyope!  
Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
Hoot, toot, hoot, toot,  
Whoop whoop whoop whoop,  
Willy willy willy wah HOO!  
Sizz, fizz. . . .

#### IV

Every soul  
Resident  
In the earth's one circus tent!  
Every man a trapeze king





Then a pleased spectator there.  
On the benches! In the ring!  
While the neighbors gawk and stare  
And the cheering rolls along.  
Almost every day a race  
When the merry starting gong  
Rings, each chariot on the line,  
Every driver fit and fine  
With a steel-spring Roman grace.  
Almost every day a dream,  
Almost every day a dream.  
Every girl,  
Maid or wife,  
Wild with music,  
Eyes agleam  
With that marvel called desire:



Actress, princess, fit for life,  
Armed with honor like a knife,  
Jumping thro' the hoops of fire.  
(Listen to the lion roar!)  
Making all the children shout  
Clowns shall tumble all about,  
Painted high and full of song  
While the cheering rolls along,  
Tho' they scream,  
Tho' they rage,  
Every beast in his cage,  
Every beast in his den,  
That aforetime troubled men.

V

I am the Kallyope, Kallyope, Kallyope,  
Tooting hope, tooting hope, tooting hope,  
    tooting hope;  
Shaking window-pane and door  
With a crashing cosmic tune,  
With the war-cry of the spheres,  
Rhythm of the roar of noon,  
Rhythm of Niagara's roar,  
Voicing planet, star and moon,  
SHRIEKING of the better years.  
Prophet-singers will arise,  
Prophets coming after me,  
Sing my song in softer guise  
With more delicate surprise;  
I am but the pioneer  
Voice of the Democracy;  
I am the gutter dream,  
I am the golden dream,

Singing science, singing steam.  
I will blow the proud folk down,  
(Listen to the lion roar!)  
I am the Kallyope, Kallyope, Kallyope,  
Tooting hope, tooting hope, tooting hope,  
    tooting hope,  
Willy willy willy wah Hoo!  
Hoot toot, hoot toot, hoot toot, hoot toot,  
Whoop whoop, whoop whoop,  
Whoop whoop, whoop whoop,  
Willy willy willy wah Hoo!  
Sizz. . . .  
Fizz. . . .

## *The Santa-Fé Trail (A Humoresque)*

(I asked the old Negro: "What is that bird that sings so well?" He answered: "That is the Rachel-Jane." "Hasn't it another name—lark, or thrush, or the like?" "No. Jus' Rachel-Jane.")

### I. IN WHICH A RACING AUTO COMES FROM THE EAST

This is the order of the music of the morn- *To be sung*  
ing:— *delicately, to*  
First, from the far East comes but a croon- *an improvised*  
ing. *tune.*

The crooning turns to a sunrise singing.  
Hark to the *calm*-horn, *bal*m-horn, *psalm*-horn.  
Hark to the *faint*-horn, *quaint*-horn, *saint*-horn . . .

Hark to the *pace*-horn, *chase*-horn, *race*- *To be sung or*  
horn. *read with*  
*great speed.*

And the holy veil of the dawn has gone.  
Swiftly the brazen car comes on.  
It burns in the East as the sunrise burns.  
I see great flashes where the far trail turns.  
Its eyes are lamps like the eyes of dragons.  
It drinks gasoline from big red flagons.  
Butting through the delicate mists of the morning,  
It comes like lightning, goes past roaring.  
It will hail all the windmills, taunting, ringing,  
Dodge the cyclones,  
Count the milestones,  
On through the ranges the prairie-dog tills—  
Scooting past the cattle on the thousand hills. . . .

Ho for the <i>tear-horn, scare-horn, dare-</i> horn,	<i>To be read or sung in a roll- ing bass, with some delibera- tion.</i>
Ho for the <i>gay-horn, bark-horn, bay-horn.</i>	
<i>Ho for Kansas, land that restores us</i>	
<i>When houses choke us, and great books bore us!</i>	
<i>Sunrise Kansas, harvesters' Kansas,</i>	
<i>A million men have found you before us.</i>	
<i>A million men have found you before us.</i>	

## II. IN WHICH MANY AUTOS PASS WESTWARD

I want live things in their pride to remain.	<i>In an even, deliberate, narrative manner.</i>
I will not kill one grasshopper vain	
Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a	
door.	

I let him out, give him one chance more.  
Perhaps, while he gnaws my hat in his whim,  
Grasshopper lyrics occur to him.

I am a tramp by the long trail's border,  
Given to squalor, rags and disorder.  
I nap and amble and yawn and look,  
Write fool-thoughts in my grubby book,  
Recite to the children, explore at my ease,  
Work when I work, beg when I please,  
Give crank-drawings, that make folks stare  
To the half-grown boys in the sunset glare,  
And get me a place to sleep in the hay  
At the end of a live-and-let-live day.

I find in the stubble of the new-cut weeds  
A whisper and a feasting, all one needs:  
The whisper of the strawberries, white and red  
Here where the new-cut weeds lie dead.

But I would not walk all alone till I die  
Without some life-drunk horns going by.  
And up round this apple-earth they come  
Blasting the whispers of the morning dumb:—  
Cars in a plain realistic row.  
And fair dreams fade  
When the raw horns blow.

On each snapping pennant  
A big black name:—  
The careering city  
Whence each car came.

They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah,  
Tallahassee and Texarkana.

They tour from St. Louis, Columbus, Man- *Like a train-*  
istee, *caller in a*  
*Union Depot.*

They tour from Peoria, Davenport, Kankakee.

Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston,

Cars from Topeka, Emporia, and Austin.

Cars from Chicago, Hannibal, Cairo.

Cars from Alton, Oswego, Toledo.

Cars from Buffalo, Kokomo, Delphi,

Cars from Lodi, Carmi, Loami.

Ho for Kansas, land that restores us

When houses choke us, and great books bore us!

While I watch the highroad

And look at the sky,

While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur

Roll their legions without rain

Over the blistering Kansas plain—

While I sit by the milestone

And watch the sky,

The United States

Goes by.

Listen to the *iron*-horns, ripping, racking,  
Listen to the *quack*-horns, slack and clack-  
ing.

*To be given  
very harshly,  
with a  
snapping ex-  
plosiveness.*

Way down the road, trilling like a toad,  
Here comes the *dice*-horn, here comes the *vice*-horn,  
Here comes the *snarl*-horn, *brawl*-horn, *lewd*-horn,  
Followed by the *prude*-horn, bleak and squeaking:—  
(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from  
Kansas.)

Here comes the *hod*-horn, *plod*-horn, *sod*-horn,  
Nevermore-to-roam-horn, *loam*-horn, *home*-horn.  
(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from  
Kansas.)

Far away the Rachel-Jane  
Not defeated by the horns  
Sings amid a hedge of thorns:—

*To be read or  
sung, well-nigh  
in a whisper.*

“Love and life,  
Eternal youth—  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,  
Dew and glory,  
Love and truth,  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.”

WHILE SMOKE-BLACK FREIGHTS ON THE  
DOUBLE-TRACKED RAILROAD,

*Louder and  
louder, faster  
and faster.*

DRIVEN AS THOUGH BY THE FOUL FIEND'S OX-GOAD,  
SCREAMING TO THE WEST COAST, SCREAMING TO THE EAST,  
CARRY OFF A HARVEST, BRING BACK A FEAST,  
AND HARVESTING MACHINERY AND HARNESS FOR THE  
BEAST,

THE HAND-CARS WHIZ, AND RATTLE ON THE RAILS,  
THE SUNLIGHT FLASHES ON THE TIN DINNER-PAILS.

And then, in an instant, ye modern men,  
Behold the procession once again,  
The United States goes by!

*In a rolling  
bass, with  
increasing  
deliberation.*



Listen to the *iron-horns*, ripping, racking, *With a snapping explosiveness.*  
Listen to the *wise-horn*, desperate-to-advise-  
horn,

Listen to the *fast-horn*, *kill-horn*, *blast-horn*. . . .

Far away the Rachel-Jane *To be sung or read well-nigh in a whisper.*  
Not defeated by the horns  
Sings amid a hedge of thorns:—

“Love and life,  
Eternal youth,  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,  
Dew and glory,  
Love and truth.  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.”

The mufflers open on a score of cars  
With wonderful thunder,

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,

CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK,

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,

Listen to the *gold-horn* . . .

*Old-horn* . . .

*Cold-horn* . . .

And all of the tunes, till the night comes down  
On hay-stack, and ant-hill, and wind-bitten town.

Then far in the west, as in the beginning, *To be sung to exactly the same whispered tune as the first five lines.*  
Dim in the distance, sweet in retreating,

Hark to the *faint-horn*, *quaint-horn*, *saint-horn*,

Hark to the *calm-horn*, *balm-horn*, *psalm-horn*. . . .

They are hunting the goals that they under-stand:— *This section beginning sonorously, ending in a languorous whisper.*

San Francisco and the brown sea-sand.

My goal is the mystery the beggars win.







I am caught in the web the night-winds spin.  
 The edge of the wheat-ridge speaks to me.  
 I talk with the leaves of the mulberry tree.  
 And now I hear, as I sit all alone  
 In the dusk, by another big Santa-Fé stone,  
 The souls of the tall corn gathering round  
 And the gay little souls of the grass in the ground.  
 Listen to the tale the cottonwood tells.  
 Listen to the windmills, singing o'er the wells.  
 Listen to the whistling flutes without price  
 Of myriad prophets out of paradise.  
 Harken to the wonder  
 That the night-air carries. . . .  
 Listen . . . to . . . the . . . whisper . . .  
 Of . . . the . . . prairie . . . fairies  
     Singing o'er the fairy plain:—  
     “Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.  
     Love and glory,  
     Stars and rain,  
     Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. . . .”

*To the same  
 whispered tune  
 as the Rachel-  
 Jane song—  
 but very  
 slowly.*





PART IV  
NIGHTINGALES



## *The Chinese Nightingale*

### A SONG IN CHINESE TAPESTRIES

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,  
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead—  
Ended license, lust and play:  
Why do you iron the night away?  
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,  
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round.  
While the monster shadows glower and creep,  
What can be better for man than sleep?"

"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;  
"My breast with vision is satisfied,  
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,  
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."  
Then he lit five firecrackers in a pan.  
"Pop, pop," said the firecrackers, "cra-cra-crack."  
He lit a joss stick long and black.  
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;  
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,  
And this was the song of the gray small bird:  
"Where is the princess, loved forever,  
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;  
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,  
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.  
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,  
And there on the snowy table wide  
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,  
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face. . . .  
Yet she put away all form and pride,  
And laid her glimmering veil aside  
With a childlike smile for Chang and for me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,  
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,  
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,  
Ironed and ironed, all alone.

And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:

"Have you forgotten . . .

Deep in the ages, long, long ago,  
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—  
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?  
We sold our grain in the peacock town—  
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown—  
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown. . . .

When all the world was drinking blood  
From the skulls of men and bulls  
And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,  
We drank our tea in China beneath the sacred spice-trees,  
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.  
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,  
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,  
Captured the world with his carolling.

Do you remember, ages after,  
At last the world we were born to own?  
You were the heir of the yellow throne—  
The world was the field of the Chinese man  
And we were the pride of the Sons of Han?  
We copied deep books and we carved in jade,  
And wove blue silks in the mulberry shade. . . ."

"I remember, I remember  
That Spring came on forever,  
That Spring came on forever,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,  
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,



Though dawn was bringing the western day,  
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing away. . . .  
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,  
The railroad-yard and the clock-tower bright,  
Demon clouds crossed ancient valleys;  
Across wide lotus-ponds of light  
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,  
Flourished her fan, her shimmering fan,  
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:  
"Do you remember,  
Ages after,  
Our palace of heart-red stone?  
Do you remember  
The little doll-faced children  
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,  
That came from all the empire  
Honoring the throne?—  
The loveliest fête and carnival  
Our world had ever known?  
The sages sat about us  
With their heads bowed in their beards,  
With proper meditation on the sight.  
Confucius was not born;  
We lived in those great days  
Confucius later said were lived aright. . . .  
And this gray bird, on that day of spring,  
With a bright-bronze breast, and a bronze-brown wing,  
Captured the world with his carolling.  
Late at night his tune was spent.  
Peasants,  
Sages,  
Children,

Homeward went,  
And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.  
We walked alone. Our hearts were high and free.  
I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,  
I had a silvery name—do you remember  
The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim—  
He bent to his work, ironing away;  
But she was arch, and knowing and glowing,  
For the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . . darling . . ."  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

The great gray joss on the rustic shelf,  
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,  
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,  
Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:  
"Back through a hundred, hundred years  
Hear the waves as they climb the piers,  
Hear the howl of the silver seas,  
Hear the thunder.  
Hear the gongs of holy China  
How the waves and tunes combine  
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,  
Incantation old and fine:  
    'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons,  
    Red firecrackers, and green firecrackers  
    And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.' "

Then the lady, rosy-red,  
Turned to her lover Chang and said:  
"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn

When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,  
And worked a spell this great joss taught  
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?  
From the flag high over our palace home  
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—  
A king of beauty and tempest and thunder  
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder.  
A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.  
We mounted the back of that royal slave  
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.  
We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,  
We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.  
To our secret ivory house we were borne.  
We looked down the wonderful wing-filled regions  
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.  
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;  
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist  
That we this hour regain—  
Song-fire for the brain.  
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,  
When you cried for your heart's new pain,  
What was my name in the dragon-mist,  
In the rings of rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.  
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:  
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,  
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—  
Ere you returned to the shining harbor  
There were pirates by ten thousand

Descended on the town  
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,  
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.  
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.  
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;  
I stood upon the sand;  
With lifted hand I looked upon them  
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,  
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.  
Deep, deep below the bay, the seaweed and the spray,  
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,  
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies.”

Then this did the noble lady say:  
“Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day  
When you flew like a courier on before  
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,  
And we drove the steed in your singing path—  
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath:  
And found our city all aglow,  
And knighted this joss that decked it so?  
There were golden fishes in the purple river  
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.  
There were golden junks in the laughing river,  
And silver junks and rainbow junks:  
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,  
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies,  
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town  
By the black-lacquer gate  
Where walked in state  
The kind king Chang  
And his sweetheart mate. . . .  
With his flag-born dragon  
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade,

And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,  
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,  
And priests who bowed them down to your song—  
By the city called Han, the peacock town,  
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,  
The nightingale town.”

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,  
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,  
A vague, unravelling, final tune,  
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;  
Sang as though for the soul of him  
Who ironed away in that bower dim:—

“I have forgotten  
Your dragons great,  
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.  
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.  
I vaguely know  
There were heroes of old,  
Troubles more than the heart could hold,  
There were wolves in the woods  
Yet lambs in the fold,  
Nests in the top of the almond tree. . . .  
The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree . . .  
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,  
Years on years I but half-remember . . .  
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,  
May and June, then dead December,  
Dead December, then again June.  
Who shall end my dream’s confusion?  
Life is a loom, weaving illusion . . .  
I remember, I remember  
There were ghostly veils and laces . . .  
In the shadowy bowery places . . .

With lovers' ardent faces  
Bending to one another,  
Speaking each his part.  
They infinitely echo  
In the red cave of my heart.  
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart,'  
They said to one another.  
They spoke, I think, of perils past.  
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.  
One thing I remember:  
Spring came on forever,  
Spring came on forever,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

## *The Flower of Mending*

(To Eudora, after I had had certain dire adventures)

When Dragon-fly would fix his wings,  
When Snail would patch his house,  
When moths have marred the overcoat  
Of tender Mister Mouse,

The pretty creatures go with haste  
To the sunlit blue-grass hills  
Where the Flower of Mending yields the wax  
And webs to help their ills.

The hour the coats are waxed and webbed  
They fall into a dream,  
And when they wake the ragged robes  
Are joined without a seam.

My heart is but a dragon-fly,  
My heart is but a mouse,  
My heart is but a haughty snail  
In a little stony house.

Your hand was honey-comb to heal,  
Your voice a web to bind.  
You were a Mending Flower to me  
To cure my heart and mind.







## *Sunshine*

(For a very little girl, not a year old)

CATHERINE FRAZEE WAKEFIELD

The sun gives not directly  
The coal, the diamond crown;  
Not in a special basket  
Are these from Heaven let down.

The sun gives not directly  
The plough, man's iron friend;  
Not by a path or stairway  
Do tools from Heaven descend.

Yet sunshine fashions all things  
That cut or burn or fly;  
And corn that seems upon the earth  
Is made in the hot sky.

The gravel of the roadbed,  
The metal of the gun,  
The engine of the airship  
Trace somehow from the sun.

And so your soul, my lady  
(Mere sunshine, nothing more),  
Prepares me the contraptions  
I work with or adore.

Within me cornfields rustle,  
Niagaras roar their way,  
Vast thunderstorms and rainbows  
Are in my thought today.

Ten thousand anvils sound there  
By forges flaming white,  
And many books I read there,  
And many books I write;

And freedom's bells are ringing,  
And bird-choirs chant and fly—  
The whole world works in me today  
And all the shining sky,

Because of one small lady  
Whose smile is my chief sun.  
She gives not any gift to me  
Yet all gifts, giving one. . . .

Amen.



















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*VACHEL LINDSAY* was born in Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879. In 1906 he took the first of his long tramps, walking through Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, preaching "the gospel of beauty." With the zeal of a missionary and the showmanship of a minstrel, he read his poems to anyone who would listen, traded poems for bread, and tried to wake a response to beauty in the forgotten corners of America.

His best-known poem, "The Congo," was published in 1914. In that poem Lindsay extended his dramatic effects by developing a chant, an infectious blend of syncopated rhythm, religion, ragtime. Later he added gestures, stage directions, and chanted responses. These innovations succeeded at once, and people who had always disdained poetry clamored to hear his resonant baritone voice half speak, half sing his booming, galloping, spirited poems about American heroes.

For more than twenty years he roamed through the country, exciting his audiences and exhausting himself. He died December 5, 1931, but many of his poems will live forever in the hearts of Americans.

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*An Anthology of Poetry Selected Especially  
for Readers Whose Twenties Still Lie Ahead*

# ROOFS OF GOLD

## Poems to Read Aloud

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*compiled and with an introduction by*

**PADRAIC COLUM**

*winner of the Regina Medal*

FROM the great roll of poetry in English, Padraic Colum has selected only those poems that speak at once to boys and girls of junior- and senior-high-school age—poems forged of striking images, colorful action, and spirited adventure, lilting rhymes and rhythms that beg to be memorized and cherished by the young at heart. Many of the poems are traditional favorites, while others are contemporary—all are loved by those who love good poetry. Here is a sampling of the poems included in this splendidly varied volume:

*The Broncho That Would Not Be Broken*

by Vachel Lindsay

*Growltiger's Last Stand* by T. S. Eliot

*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

*The Cat and the Moon* by W. B. Yeats

*The Tiger* by William Blake

*O Captain! My Captain!* by Walt Whitman

*The Express* by Stephen Spender

*John Gilpin* by William Cowper

*The Song of the Western Men*

by Robert Stephen Hawker